

(c) The proceeds of the cess are utilised for development of "Oil Industry" which includes Petroleum & Natural Gas, Chemical & Petro-chemicals and Fertiliser sectors, as provided under the Oil Industry Development Act.

**Newsitem 'India irked over Iran's Pipeline Stand'**

1624. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the newsitem captioned "India irked over Iran's pipeline stand" as reported in the Hindustan Time dated 21st July, 2000;

(b) whether Iran wants to bring Pakistan into the picture on the gas pipeline talks instead of ongoing bilateral negotiations between India and Iran;

(c) whether Government have received from Iran any pre-feasibility study by the Australian firm, BHP, reportedly ordered by Iran, on economic benefits in this project; and

(c) if so, Government's stand in this matter and since when talks between the two countries are going on?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (d) The Government of Iran has sent a preliminary proposal to supply natural gas to India through an onland pipeline route passing through Pakistan. An Indo-Iran Joint Committee on Transmission of Gas consisting of representatives of the Governments of Iran and India has been constituted to examine all aspects of the pipeline proposed by the Government of Iran. This project is being discussed as a bilateral project between India and Iran.